Getting somewhere:
Annual report of the Deadly Writin', Readin' and Talkin' Project
(DWRAT) 2001

Bronwyn Parkin,
Coordinator, DWRAT Project
PROJECT PERSONNEL

School Principal: Terms 1-3 Julie Bishop Dip T, Grad Dip Ed (Language and Literacy)
Term 4: Tony Zed (acting)
Co-ordinator: Bronwyn Parkin B.A., Grad Dip Ed, Grad Dip Comm & School, M. Ed
Co-researcher, functional grammar adviser: Rose Ashton Dip T, B Ed, Grad Dip Ed (TESOL)
Classroom Teachers: Katrina Georgiou, Maureen Walker, Caterina Mancini, Cherie Venables,
Lyn Shepherd, Renee Miller, Julie Murphy, Ray Becker, Vicki Swanson, Gary Wheaton
Aboriginal Education Teacher: Anne Hamnett
Aboriginal Education Workers: Muriel O'Loughlin, Thurza Buckskin (trainee)
(Management Team: Julie Bishop, then Tony Zed, and Bronwyn Parkin)
OUTLINE OF PROJECT
Outline of project
Background

The literacy levels amongst Aboriginal students have been repeatedly shown to be significantly lower than the general population on all measures (Masters and Forster, 1997 p225, MCEETYA 1995). However, the results from the previous two years of work in the project were becoming more and more positive, particularly among older students at risk (See We're on to something here and On the Move: DWRAT Reports 1999 and 2000). By the end of 2000, the effects of the concerted effort to improve literacy levels in the school, including Scaffolding, were showing in whole school writing assessments, as well as reading, and all the teachers involved in DWRAT in 2000 volunteered to continue in 2001.

Aims of project

DWRAT began in 1999 as a DEETYA funded Strategic Results Project. Its aims, as part of a formal agreement between DEETYA and the Aboriginal Education Unit, Enfield, were to improve the oracy and literacy outcomes of targeted Aboriginal students from Reception to Year 7 at Salisbury North R-7 school through an action research project focussing on teaching/learning practices in standard and Aboriginal English (DEETYA agreement with Aboriginal Education Unit, Enfield, November 1997)

The aims for 2001 were:

1. To continue to develop students' literacy skills through Scaffolding pedagogy (this pedagogy will be explained in more detail later)

2. To maintain the number of classes using Scaffolding as the basis of their literacy programs through the training of new staff who had replaced previously trained staff.

3. To increase teachers' knowledge and skills in Scaffolding and its implications for literacy teaching
Implementation

Classroom and support teachers recruited
All DWRAT staff from 2000 continued with the program and the four new staff appointed to the school volunteered to be trained in Scaffolding early in the year. By the end of the year, nine classrooms were involved in Scaffolding. Three classrooms had an unsettled year, with changes of teachers, but with the support of ESL teacher Rose Ashton, and AET Anne Hamnett, the program could be maintained in those classrooms.

Initial and ongoing theoretical input
A full day’s training was organised for the experienced DWRAT teachers early in Term 1, ie those who had been working in the project for 12 months or more. This training early in the year has become a tradition. It enabled us to focus more closely on the theory underpinning scaffolding, and build teacher knowledge in specific parts of the process. Teachers worked on text selection and text analysis and have been able to work more independently on these aspects this year. It was very rewarding to see just how confident teachers were, after 12 months, in using the language of scaffolding to discuss their work.

An all day introductory workshop was held at the beginning of Term 2 this year for our new staff. Because of the continuing enquiries from other schools to learn more about the process, the day was opened to other teachers in the SA Department of Education. 50 teachers came, and were introduced to the process by members of the DWRAT team.

The DWRAT coordinator made contact with Brian Gray and Wendy Cowey from the University of Canberra on their visits to Adelaide. As usual, the visits shed more light on the reading and writing processes used in DWRAT, and have particularly influenced the way we work towards independence in student writing.

The Language and Literacy Course, a course in functional grammar, was again tutored by Rose Ashton, our Coordinator Teaching and Learning this year. This 30-hour course builds knowledge of functional grammar and its use in the classroom. Several more teachers took part in the course this year.
Regular planning with classroom teachers

It is again evident that regular and sufficient planning is crucial to the ongoing success of this program. This planning is carried out in two ways: firstly, each class team, consisting of class teacher, ESL teacher, AET, Special Ed, and School Service Officers, meets for 2 lessons at the beginning of every term. At this time, the text to be scaffolded is introduced, and scope and sequence laid out. Changes were made to the term’s timetable this year: the new text is introduced in Week 3 of each term, and overlaps into the next term. In this way, teachers are finishing off the previous text while they prepare for the next one, and there is no interruption to the program.

Secondly, the teaching teams aim to weekly to plan the next week’s lessons. Thorough planning at the beginning of each term means that planning throughout the term can be quite short. The weekly planning works more regularly for some than others. It is not always managed. However, all teachers involved realise the value of this planning, and try to fit it in somewhere.

Intensive scaffolded literacy lessons

The Scaffolded Literacy process has been documented by others (Gray, B. and Cowey, W., 1997, Rose, D., Gray, B. and Cowey, W., 1999). We have continued to use the pedagogy as the basis of our literacy teaching, and are pleased to note the improvement in our own teaching, as well as in the understanding of students about literacy:

The core program is built around a systematic and progressive approach to literacy development. The approach leads learners through intensive exploration of high level text comprehension which pays careful attention to understanding the complex grammar that is encountered in literate text as opposed to everyday speech. As students begin to engage successfully with reading following this support, the emphasis shifts to

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development of high level decoding. Spelling and eventually to writing. (Gray, B. and Cowey, W., 2001)

Each DWRAT class has a 50 minute scaffolded literacy lesson three or four days a week. It is of concern that some teachers see their programs so crowded that they cannot commit themselves for four days a week. The scaffolded literacy lessons are team taught in various ways, each class teacher negotiating with the DWRAT team. There are almost always at least two adults in each classroom, although the older classes have demonstrated that it is possible to teach some aspects of scaffolding effectively without this extra support. Some classes are split into two smaller groups of differing ability levels.

Reading Support Program from Aboriginal Parent Literacy Workers

When we began the program in 1999, we were keen to find ways that Aboriginal parents could have a recognised and valued role in the school, at the same time supporting their children's literacy learning. The Reading Support program evolved from an original series of workshops for parents on language issues, particularly dialect and register. Parents examined the difficulties which children might encounter with those issues in school.

Based on the theories of Marie Clay and Brian Gray (Clay, M., 1999, Gray, B., Cowey, W. and Graetz, M., 1998), a training program was developed to teach parents an instructionally effective way of listening to children read. This year, in recognising the active role adults play in teaching their children in this context, we have given it the title of 'one-to-one reading instruction' rather than 'listening to children read'.

The training workshop for the program has been run several times this year: twice at Ceduna Area School, and at Flinders View Primary School in Port Augusta. Muriel O'Loughlin, the school's Aboriginal Education Worker, has co-run a series of workshops for staff at Kaurna Plains School, and continues to support them until they are working confidently on their own. Along with the trainee AEW, Thurza Buckskin, she conducted the workshop for AEWs at Raukkan Aboriginal School in Term 2.

Our AEW trainee, Thurza Buckskin, successfully organised and ran the reading program for Junior Primary Aboriginal students for three terms at Salisbury North R-7 until her traineeship finished. It is hoped that she will continue to use this knowledge in an AEW position in another school.

Focused case studies

The conviction of the management team has always been that successful pedagogy should assist all indigenous children. We considered that we would not count ourselves as successful unless we had managed to improve the literacy skills of the Aboriginal children most at risk in the research classrooms. Consequently, in 1999, we identified in each classroom a child whose progress could be the subject of a focused case study which would help us determine if scaffolding did indeed assist those students most at risk. While

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generalised data show us the big picture, these case studies are important in showing us how the scaffolding pedagogy has impacted on individuals whose progress is of concern to us. Data has been collected in the form of writing samples, test results, and tape recording of their reading each term.

Three criteria were used for the selection of students:

- The literacy skills of the child were of considerable concern to us
- They must be children who were settled into the school and unlikely to leave during the study
- They must have participated in pre-project literacy assessments.

The four students used as case studies in 2000 still attend the school. However, Travis, the youngest of the case study students, was not involved in a Scaffolding class this year. We were in the happy position of not having a Year 1 student who was considered educationally at risk. Consequently only three students are involved as a case studies student this year.
PROJECT PERFORMANCE
Data Collection

Data on student performance in reading and writing has been collected each year. All Aboriginal students in the school are assessed, as almost all students are involved in DWRAT classes at various times, although not necessarily each year.

The measurement tool for Junior Primary students, i.e., Years Reception (entry level) - Year 3 in 2001 was the Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement (Clay, M., 1997). The assessment tool allows us to compare students with a large cohort of their own age, i.e., 6.0 - 7.3 years, with stanine levels 1-3 being of concern, 4-6 being average, and 7-9 being above average. Data is collected annually in November.

The Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers (DART), published by the Australian Council for Education Research is the tool for older students (ACER 1997). Two versions, a Middle and an Upper Primary test allow for a wide range of literacy levels to be tested. Students from Years 4 and 5 completed the Middle Primary test. Students from Years 6 and 7 completed the Upper Primary test. The test plots students according to their movement within and across the Australian Profile Levels. The students were tested in Viewing, Reading and Writing.

The Viewing and Reading tests were marked by individual teachers, using the guides provided by DART. Writing samples were assessed by a panel of 4 teachers, as there is more room for subjectivity in the assessment of writing skills. Data is collected annually in August.

N.B. Year 3 students are assessed using the Marie Clay test, rather than DART, although they are strictly too old for the Marie Clay test. There are two reasons for this: the first is that there are always some Year 3 students for whom DART is too difficult, and testing the same Year 3 cohort using different tests does not provide us with useful data. Secondly, the students in the middle and upper primary end of the school already complete the same assessment tasks two years in a row. While it is hoped that 12 months in between the DART test helps to retain the validity of the outcomes, completing the same test three years in a row, i.e., Years 3-5 is probably stretching things a bit.
Junior Primary Performance targets

The Junior Primary students (Reception to Year 3) and the Primary students (Years 4-7) had different goals set, according to the assessment tools used to measure their literacy growth.

For Junior Primary students, the following targets were set:
The Marie Clay scales are measured in stanine levels for cohorts of particular ages. As a guide, students measuring from stanine levels 1-3 are considered educationally at risk. Students in stanine levels 4-6 are working at an appropriate level. Students working at stanine levels 7-9 are doing well. Our goal is for all students to be working within stanine levels 4-6 except for Year 3 students. Because they are actually older than the cohort against which they are being measured, their goal is stanine levels 7-9.

Fig 1: Reception-Year 3 goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal (in stanine levels)</th>
<th>Reception</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stanine levels 4-6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanine levels 4-6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanine levels 4-6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanine levels 7-9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Junior Primary Outcomes (Reception-Year 3):
The shaded area in each graph represents the scores we would like our students to achieve at this age. Scores higher than the shaded area, ie 7-9, show a strength in the area. Scores lower than this, ie 1-3 suggest a child to whom we must pay close attention.

Reception Reading
The graphs above show the results of the Marie Clay 'Early Detection of Reading Difficulties' tests from the six Aboriginal Reception children. Only two of the students had been tested previously; the others are new to the school this year. Half of the students, including some new to school this year, have performed at an acceptable level in Concepts of Print and Letter Identification. Only one student has been able to identify more than one sight word.

Of particular concern is student 5. He has been at school for over 12 months, coming to us with little or no Kindergarten experience. He is just beginning to make some sense of school and school learning. Student 6 has been at school for the same amount of time, and is making great gains. Data for Reception students is mostly base-line. Until we see what they do throughout 2002, we won't know what effect our pedagogy is having.

Reception Writing

Five of the six Reception students scored the minimum in the Writing Vocabulary test. This means that they can write their own name, and possibly one or two other words correctly. Only student 6 has shown a significant gain over the year. Our previous years' assessments have shown us that writing is the last area of literacy in which students make gains, so I am not surprised at this.
The Dictation test assesses children’s ability to hear and record sounds. It requires children to record a sentence containing 37 phonemes. A score is given for each phoneme heard and recorded, even if the spelling is not accurate. It is evident from the Dictation assessment that a third of our reception Aboriginal students are able to hear sounds and record them. Student 5, who has scored so low in all tests, has a history of otitis media. This information supports our reasons for working with Gray’s scaffolded spelling, which emphasises visual memory, rather than aural acuity as the basis of beginning spelling.

Year 1 Reading

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Apart from one student in the Sight Word test, all five students have reached our goals in Reading in all three tests. The Marie Clay tests do not provide a guide on expected rates of improvement over 12 months. Nevertheless, some of the students have shown great leaps in their knowledge. Of particular interest again this year is the Concepts of Print test, where all students are above the median (above stanine 5).

**Year 1 Writing:**

The graph says it all! It is expected that Aboriginal students may have difficulty with aural acuity, that is hearing and sounding out words. As Reception students, three of the five students were indeed in the ‘at risk’ band of the graph. This year all students have reached the goals, and two obtained full marks in the test.
60% of the Year 1 students have reached our goal of the middle band of performance. Obviously the results from this test are still of concern. Nevertheless, all students have shown growth since last year, students 1-3 showing remarkable improvements.

**Year 2 Reading**

- **Year 2 Letter ID**

- **Year 2 Concepts of Print**

- **Year 2 Sight Words**

All Year 2 students have reached our goals in all three reading tests. In the Letter Identification test, and the Concepts of Print test, all students are in the top band of
achievement. These results, with all four students scoring 9 or 8, supports the value of the close attention to print enabled by scaffolded literacy.

The scores in the sight word test are more of a worry. Although all four students have reached the middle band of achievement, two have not shown any improvement from last year. Fortunately, this is not the only sight word test the children do. They score better on tests which assess the sight words they have been learning each term as part of their text study.

Year 2 Writing

All four students have reached our goals in both writing tests. Two students have made remarkable improvement in the Dictation test where they are asked to record the phonemes in a sentence.
Year 3 Reading

It should be noted that all Year 3 students are at least 1.3 years older than the cohort against which they are being measured in the Marie Clay Observation Survey. By Year 3, notions such as Concepts of Print, and Letter Identification should be well and truly established. Hence the shaded area defining our goal is at the highest end of the stanine curve. We would hope that our students had mastered all these skills by the end of Year 3. However, it should be noted again that only one of our Year 3 children had sufficient reading skills to be able to complete the DART assessment test for Year 3.

The students who have not achieved the top score in the Concepts of Print test are not able to distinguish two words in the wrong order in a sentence, or two letters in the wrong order in a word. At Year 3, this is of serious concern. The fact that half of the students have scored poorly on the sight word test is also worrying; these are simple and
often used sight words such as \textit{where}, \textit{going}, \textit{big}, which should be easily recognised by our students at this age. Two of the three students whose sight word knowledge is still of concern, students 2 and 6, have shown gains since the last test. Students 5 and 7 have shown great improvement in their sight word knowledge.

Three students have actually decreased their score in the Letter Identification since last year. This score reflects their difficulty in distinguishing the differences between b/d, and p/q out of context.

\textbf{Year 3 Writing}

![Graph showing Year 3 Writing Vocab and Dictation scores]

As explained in detail in previous reports, the writing vocabulary test requires 100\% accuracy in each word recorded by the student, so that students who like to attempt longer and more complex words are actually penalised. Nevertheless, the graph of the writing vocabulary results shows that we still have work to do here. It is encouraging that some students have shown gains of 2 or more stanine points since last year’s test so they are improving.

Five of the seven Year 3 students have achieved the goal in the Dictation test, assessing aural accuracy. Student 2 has shown no change since last year. The results from this test confirm our concern with his learning.
Did we achieve our targets in Junior Primary?

Our targets for the Junior Primary classes were as follows:
Reception, Year 1, and Year 2: Stanine levels 4-6 (These year levels match the cohort provided by Marie Clay as the control group)
Year 3: Stanine levels 7-9 (as they are actually older than the older of Clay’s cohorts).
We achieved our targets in the following areas:

a) All Year 1 and 2 students have reached or passed our goals in the three Reading tests.
b) All Year 1 students have reached our goal with the Dictation test.
c) All Year 2 students have reached our goals in all Writing tests.
d) All Year 1, 2 and 3 students have reached or passed our goals in the Concepts of Print test.
e) After two years of scaffolding, our students still tend to demonstrate advanced knowledge about Concepts of Print when compared to Marie Clay’s cohort.
f) They also tend to be able to identify letters of the alphabet out of context very well.
g) Although many of our students do not come to school with a great degree of phonological awareness, many have shown remarkable improvement in aural accuracy as they progress through the Junior Primary classes.
h) We have not solved the issue of improving writing and sight word skills, although they are generally improving.

The 2000 DWRAT Report wrote:

Of serious concern is the Year 3 cohort, consisting of 3 boys. At this age, they should be scoring at 7-9 Stanine levels. None is scoring near that in most tests. Combined with the story of Harry, (see case studies) who is still in Year 2, the performance of these boys raises the issue of their engagement and interest in school learning. If we have not managed to keep them focused on school learning at this age, what will we do when they get older and have not caught up? This time is crucial for them and we are determining now how we can make a difference in 2001.

The story has not changed in 2001. We still have a group of four Year 3 students, mostly boys, but including one girl who is of serious concern, including Harry, whose case study is described below. These students have an agenda other than literacy: low level and high level violence in the playground with the issues carried into the classroom, lack of interest in the texts chosen, lack of engagement with literacy tasks. Although all of these students do appear to be more engaged in small group work with an adult, only one qualifies for Special Education support. Thus the support they receive in the classroom: one teacher to 14 students in DWRAT lessons is the best they can get. Even this ratio does not seem to be sufficient.

The younger students are a different story. Because Travis, the boy whose story was used as a case study in last year’s report was no longer in a DWRAT class, it became necessary to choose another student educationally at risk from a Junior Primary DWRAT class. This proved to be difficult. All students are showing great improvement, and none, at this stage, is considered at risk. Consequently, none has been selected.
Primary performance targets

For Primary students, two targets were set for the project:

Our first target is for our Year 3 and Year 5 Aboriginal students to match the median measured for Viewing, Reading and Writing in the National Literacy Survey of 1997 (using national Profile Levels as the scale of measurement). This survey used the Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers (DART) as its assessment tool. The Salisbury North R-7 data for this goal is to come from an annual assessment of Salisbury North R-7 Aboriginal students, also using DART. However, a gap remained. We were without national medians for Years 4, 6, and 7. By using the DART data for Years 3 and 5, and estimating from that data approximate goals for the year levels in between, the following targets were drawn up: our Year 4 students should be about half way between the Year 3 and Year 5 median, and our Year 6 and 7 students somewhere above the Year 5 median:

Fig 2: Upper Primary Goal 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets in profile levels (P.L.) for each year level</th>
<th>Viewing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>P.L. 3.1</td>
<td>P.L. 3.3</td>
<td>P.L. 3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>P.L. 3.4</td>
<td>P.L. 3.7</td>
<td>P.L. 3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>P.L. 3.7</td>
<td>P.L. 4.2</td>
<td>P.L. 3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>P.L. 4.0</td>
<td>P.L. 4.6</td>
<td>P.L. 3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>P.L. 4.3</td>
<td>P.L. 5.1</td>
<td>P.L. 4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shaded cells indicate goals estimated rather than actual from National Literacy Survey

Our second target is an increased rate of improvement: there are many instances where the first goal is unachievable because of the low literacy levels of the students when we started DWRAT. Students who are educationally at such risk often show little improvement from one year to another. If they are ever to catch up to their non-Aboriginal peers, they have to show rates of improvement that are more rapid than the rates of their peers. We decided that this would become another measure of success: that our students show improvements in literacy of one and a half times the rate of their national counterparts in each of Viewing, Reading, and Writing (according to the National Literacy Survey data) over a two year period. We realise that this is a rough measurement, but it gives us one way of determining if students are progressing in their literacy skills.

Fig 3: Upper Primary Goal 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National rate of improvement between years 3-5 (using Profile Levels)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNR-7 goal: 1.5 P.L. 0.9 over 2 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Primary outcomes Years 4-7

RATIONALE FOR USING THE DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENT RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS (DART)

We have used DART, an assessment tool devised by the Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) each year. Baseline data was collected in December 1998, our final test for 2001 was conducted in August. The same test was used for the 1997 National Literacy Survey (Masters and Forster, 1997). There are three reasons for our using this test:

a) it allows us to compare our own school cohort with a large group of students nationally
b) it uses the national Profile levels as its unit of measurement. These Profile Levels are the same as have previously been used in the South Australian curriculum.
c) it also enables us to integrate the assessment of Viewing, Reading and Writing by using the same content for all three aspects of literacy.

The Year 4 and 5 students use the Middle Primary assessment, the Year 6 and 7 students use the Upper Primary/Lower Secondary assessment.

Goal 1 for student achievement: students to reach the national median for their year level (actual or estimated) from National Literacy Survey data.

The following graph shows the percentage of our Year 4-7 students who have achieved our first goal by matching the national median for their year level in each of Viewing, Reading and Writing.

Fig 4: Upper Primary outcomes, goal 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yr level</th>
<th>Student Nrs.</th>
<th>Viewing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>National Median Profile Level</td>
<td>% of our students reaching median</td>
<td>National Median Profile Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although this result is still in part disappointing, particularly in Reading, the results are more encouraging if we include students who have moved to within 12 months of the median for their year level, ie they are less than one year level behind the median (as estimated from the National Literacy Survey data).

* Either the national median for Years 3 and 5 as provided by DART, or an estimate for other year levels extrapolated from the national data.
Fig 5: Upper Primary outcomes Goal 1 alternative view

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yr level</th>
<th>Student Nos.</th>
<th>Viewing</th>
<th>% of our students within 12th of median</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>% of our students within 12th of median</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>% of our students within 12th of median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no question now that our students are catching up. Writing is still proving to be the most difficult area for students to achieve at a level equal to their national cohort. Our Year 4 students are obviously a serious concern in this area. Nevertheless, when it is remembered that there was almost no growth in Writing in our first project report, the results are still encouraging.

Goal 2 for student achievement: students must show a rate of improvement one and a half times that of the national cohort in order to close the gap and finally reach the national medians.

This next graph shows the growth shown nationally over two years, taken from the National Literacy Survey, followed by our Salisbury North goals for rate of improvement. Finally it shows the average distance travelled in the past two years by each cohort of Aboriginal students at Salisbury North from Years 5-7, using Profile levels as a measure (Year 4’s are excluded from this table, as they have no previous scores with which to compare.)

Fig 6: Upper Primary Outcomes, Goal 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yr level</th>
<th>Viewing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Est. average prog. of our students in 2 yrs</td>
<td>Actual average prog. of our students in 2 yrs</td>
<td>Our goal (1.5 times national rate in 2 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.3 P.L.</td>
<td>0.5 P.L.</td>
<td>0.6 P.L.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.6 P.L.</td>
<td>0.9 P.L.</td>
<td>1.6 P.L.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.6 P.L.</td>
<td>0.9 P.L.</td>
<td>1.4 P.L.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Year 5 figures show progress over 12 months, not two years.

The question of how much data to present, and how to represent the data continues to be vexatious. Taking average scores of such small samples of students hides those students who have shown great, almost miraculous progress, and those who have shown little progress or regressed in their scores. Unfortunately, presenting individual graphs of Viewing, Reading and Writing in each year level provides readers with too much data to absorb. Nevertheless, it is in the close examination of individual students’ progress that we gain our enthusiasm. The graphs of each literacy area from years 4-7 show encouraging growth and are included as an appendix.

2 Either the national median for Years 3 and 5 as provided by DART, or an estimate for other year levels extrapolated from the national data.
Here as an example of the useful information provided by these graphs of separate areas of literacy in individual year levels, is the Year 7 Reading data.

The first column for each student represents their Year 5 result. At that time, Students 1, 2, and 4 were significantly below the Year 3 median, i.e. more than two years, and closer to three years behind their peers. In Year 7, these same students have reached the Year 6 median. In other words, these two students, educationally at risk, have doubled the national rate of growth in Reading.

Student 3, who had reached the national Year 5 median in Year 5, has only managed to reach the Year 6 median in two years. Student 5, who was above the Year 5 median in Year 5, is again above the Year 7 median. Like students 1-3, she has moved more than 1.5 times the national rate in two years.

**Did we achieve our targets in Upper Primary?**

Our primary goal was that the literacy skills in Viewing, Reading and Writing of all Aboriginal students in DWRAT classrooms would match the national median for their year level, using the national Profiles as the measure. We did not achieve that goal. Nevertheless, most of the Aboriginal students in Years 4-7 are within 12 months of that goal in Viewing and Reading. Since the beginning of the project, the Writing results have always been lower than the other two areas of Literacy. This year is no exception. Nevertheless, students continue to show growth. It's just taking longer.

Our secondary goal was that our students would show a rate of development over two years at one and a half times the national rate of growth in each area of literacy measured, i.e Viewing, Reading and Writing. With the exception of Year 5 Writing and Year 6 Reading, we have reached that secondary goal.

**Comparision with Basic Skills Test results for 2001**

In South Australia, all Year 3, 5, and 7 students take part in a state wide Basic Skills
Test. This test is conducted in August of each year. A Year 7 test was included for the first time in 2001. We have had the courage to compare the results from the Basic Skills Test with those of DART for the first time this year.

Our results are particularly encouraging when compared with the state averages of students in the 2001 South Australian Basic Skills Test. The following chart gives some idea of the rates of improvement of the Aboriginal students who participated in this year's test. The results are given for Years 5 and 7.

**Fig 7: Comparison of 2001 S.A. Basic Skills Test improvement rates with SNR-7 Aboriginal students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Salisbury North Aboriginal Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 5 average rate of improvement in 2001</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>10.5% (1.6 times state rate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 average rate of improvement in 2001</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>5.95% (1.3 times state rate)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the Salisbury North Aboriginal students who participated in the Basic Skills Test, all of the Year 5, and 1 of the five Year 7 students were below the state mean. Obviously we cannot feel complacent about our results, but it is reassuring to know that the rates of improvement are evident by other measures as well.
Three case studies

Our original project proposal argued that our new pedagogy would not count as successful unless the children educationally most at risk had shown reasonable progress. It is these children who, in standardised statewide tests, often show little or no progress from one test to the other. In 1999, as part of our monitoring of students educationally at risk, we identified four students, one each at Reception/Year 1, Year 2/3, Year 4/5 and Year 6/7 as the foci for case studies. These case studies would help us look more closely at how our project impacted on individual students.

Because three of the four original students have since left the school, three more 'students at risk' were selected for 2000. Three of these students still meet the criteria. The fourth, Travis, has not been part of a DWRAT classroom this year. A new Junior Primary student was chosen, her 'at riskness' being due to attendance, rather than performance. However, because she was the sibling of another case study student, it was thought that this selection might cause discomfort for the parents. Because of the short time available, the decision was made to stay with three case studies, rather than collect all the necessary data to tell yet another story.

The criteria for selection were:

a) they were identified by school based educators as educationally at risk
b) they were present for both pre- and post-project assessments so that we could measure distance travelled
c) they were part of DWRAT classes participating in scaffolding

Harry

Harry is the only original case study child to remain in the school. He is now in Year 3, aged nine years old. When Harry was first involved in the DWRAT project, as a Year 1, the change in his engagement in school learning was remarkable. At that stage, the scaffolding in the classroom took place four times a week in a withdrawal situation, with 7 other students. He was beginning to display literate behaviours, to focus closely on text, to get satisfaction from successful spelling and reading strategies, and to use literate language in his talk.

Now Harry is rarely seen in DWRAT lessons joining the other students in attending to text. His teacher observes that he has trouble being part of the class group on the carpet, and distances himself. He is more likely to be at his desk engaged in ritual copying into his exercise book, or in the reading corner looking at books, or flicking pencils across the room. Although he generally comes into school calm in the mornings, by the end of recess time he is on many occasions angry and not able to attend to schoolwork. Harry is removed often from the class for inappropriate behaviour. His statistics for November help to paint the picture:

Fig 8: Harry’s behaviour record for November

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possible days to attend</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days he did attend</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removals from class</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reasons for removal in November were 50% 'Violence' and 50% 'Interfering with the Rights of Others'.

Often he refuses to leave, and has to be coerced by the Aboriginal Education Worker, who is also his aunty. Harry's behaviour in the yard is often violent, with occasional suspensions as a result.

There are four Aboriginal boys in the class. Three of those four are educationally at risk. Harry has pulled up with one of those boys: they are in the same class for the first time this year. However, this boy has in the past been a best mate with the third boy in the trio. This difficult dynamic has created big problems for their teacher and the amount of time the boys have spent on schoolwork. All three boys have other, more important social agendas.

Harry's attendance has always been of concern to us. The following pie chart shows his attendance rates for this year.

He has been present for 57% of available full school days. This means that, even if he was engaging in literacy lessons, he would be still getting only 57% of the input that is offered.

Harry's literacy development is not showing the promise it did the previous year. Here are the results of five Marie Clay tests, each assessment carried out three times. In February, 1999, November 2000 and November 2001. The large leaps he made between 1999 and 2000 (apart from writing vocabulary) are evident. However, this progress has not continued in all areas, as the final test shows.
Three Case Studies

Harry's reading skills, according to this test, have stayed the same since last year. He has scored better in the Writing Vocabulary and Dictation tests. His writing is discussed below.

Harry's classroom teacher supports the observation that Harry doesn't focus on writing during literacy lessons. He can sit at his desk for a lesson, and often writes no more than three words. We have not succeeded in retaining his newly found interest in literacy that was so evident in his Year 1 lessons. Following are the writing vocabulary samples of the past four tests. These lists of words are the result of 10 minutes of writing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Vocabulary, February, 1999</th>
<th>Writing Vocabulary, August, 1999</th>
<th>Writing Vocabulary, November, 2000</th>
<th>Writing Vocabulary, November, 2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>Harry up mum dad look fat pond</td>
<td>Harry Mum Dad and am car Nikki</td>
<td>Wood the at it a not me they Sony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rosie he sat the and hat hen</td>
<td>cat Matt</td>
<td>cat you Mr ten my good was I on no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>went foot for cat rat Matt</td>
<td></td>
<td>win rest best wet mum dad Kim Matt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the encouragement of Aunty Mooee who gave him the test, Harry has recorded more words this year, but was unable to write correctly words of more complexity.

From time to time Harry gives us glimpses of hope. Here are two pieces of his writing. The first was written as a reflection of Term 3. No less than six stickers were stuck onto the page, showing how excited we were that he had completed something: the class teacher, the Aboriginal Education Teacher, the principal, the counsellor and the teacher next door all had written positive comments on the page:

**During Term 3...**

_I learnt about other countries and when we went to Cleland Wildlife Park and we learnt about other animals and kangaroos and emus and platypuses and the fish and the best of all the Tasmanian Devil the cutest koalas. My best animals is the Tasmanian and the kangaroos and the cutest koalas and the emus and the dingoes and the lizard and the snake echidna and the best lizard and the best of all is the kookaburra._

Here is another piece, this time scaffolded after reading _Mrs Wobble the Waitress_ by Allan Ahlberg. It is the orientation of the story.

_Mr Gold was a banker. He liked his job. His customers liked him too. The only problem was he couldn't count money. Yesterday Mr Gold had to count 1 million dollars so Mr Gold threw the money away, and the robber caught it and ran away. Mr Gold the banker got fired. Mr Gold the banker went home to his family. "Cheer up pa you will_
find another job - in another bank" Mrs banker said Cheer up dear  
we will make a bank of our own.

An analysis of these texts shows the former is supposed to be an evaluation but is really  
mostly a recount of an excursion he had already written about previously. The only  
conjunction used is and. There are no complex sentences and control of the simple  
additive sentences is not complete. Elaboration consists of lists of animals. The  
fragmented nature of some sentences suggests he has copied phrase from the board to  
include in his story.

The latter text about the banker is more complex, as it should be, having used Allan  
Ahlberg as a resource. Harry has elaborated on the relationship between the banker and  
his clients, and he has provided characters’ responses to the introduced problem. Harry  
has tried a more sophisticated causal conjunction, so, although but would have made  
more sense in that position. The exciting aspect of these two pieces is that Harry  
finished them!

Our difficulties with Harry’s learning remind us that we can never become complacent  
about the students in our care, and that scaffolded literacy does not solve every  
problem! I don’t know how we change our pedagogy to help Harry at this moment. I think  
the issues with Harry and school are more complex than the way we talk around a text.
Naomi
Naomi is in Year 6. Her story was first presented as a case study in 2000, when she was in a DWRAT classroom for the first time.

Of the possible school days at our school, Naomi was absent 17% of the time, and late for a further 6%. This is a slight improvement on her previous year's attendance.

Here are her scores from the Developmental Assessment Tool for Teachers tests for the past three years. The dotted lines indicate the median for each year level estimated from the national literacy survey of 1997. This dotted line is also our goal for each year level:

This graph clearly shows how Naomi has been catching up to her peers. In Viewing, she has already passed the national median. In Reading and Writing there is still a gap, but it is closing.
Naomi’s progress continues to be really exciting. The following table represents in another way the relationship of her scores to the national literacy survey data over the past two years, from Year 4 to Year 6:

**Figure 9: Relationship of Naomi’s scores to national literacy survey estimated medians for each year level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Viewing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>1.7 P.L. below</td>
<td>2.2 P.L. below</td>
<td>1.3 P.L. below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>0.2 P.L. below</td>
<td>1.4 P.L. below</td>
<td>0.4 P.L. below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>0.5 P.L. above</td>
<td>1.1 P.L. below</td>
<td>0.5 P.L. below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of impr. cf national rate</td>
<td>4.5 times national rate over 2 years</td>
<td>More than twice national rate</td>
<td>More than two and a half times nat. rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both of these tables show the extent to which Naomi’s literacy skills have improved over the past two years. This is the first time that Naomi has participated in the upper primary DART test, so familiarity with the test is not a factor in her improvement.

Naomi’s writing skills have improved remarkably. It is valuable to look at the development of her writing over the past few years so that we can see where Naomi’s school literacy development began. Following are three pieces of writing which demonstrate the growth:

The first was the piece she chose as her best piece in November, 1998. Naomi was in Year 3 at the time. Naomi uses the cluster ‘ur’ often to complete words, a strategy which suggests that she is not using aural acuity to support the spelling of her words. Her use of words like ‘hes’ for ‘his’, ‘hat’ for ‘had’ are common for children who speak Aboriginal English as their first dialect. These spellings indicate that the strategy Naomi has been taught for spelling is to ‘sound out’ the words, rather than rely on her visual memory to retain the correct spelling.

*Mrs Farnerys lifeonbfarm
hes Mum habur and Fumtur
and every ret thret they hat to got tr got the Bukel ont and
go to the toele there and she did wot to the a bus pitur her mum had to mekel and a cow’s and the go tur wat a tur Lin peur
and de for*

Naomi, 26-11-98

The second piece was written in 2000 after studying Storm Boy by Colin Thiele in Term 4 of this year. It is a scaffolded piece, and demonstrates how children are able to take resources from published authors, and use those resources in their own writing.

*Tjerayh live between the beaches and the bush. His home was a long curved snake of dirt roads. All around were trees and bushes, tall and different shades of brown.*
Tjerayh lived with Scott, his father. Their home was Wherevilla, a big house made of bricks and tiles. It had lots of little windows made of clean glass. Even though it was hot all year round, Tjerayh was happy there.

When Tjerayh went running along the poolside, or the beach, or the river - the fish weren't afraid. They knew he was a friend.

But one morning he saw everything in uproar and confusion. Two big men killed the fish. They had found the fish's home; it was so big like a classroom with lots of fish. They killed 20 of them and only 10 were still alive.

Tjerayh crept forward in fear and anger from behind a tussock he looked around sadly at the run and destruction. Just as he was about to run back to tell Scott to grab his spear gun there was a faint swishing and crying and there in the water hiding behind fish Tjerayh carefully picked them up and put them into a plastic bag filled with water and gently ran back to Scott.

And that was how miss Ally miss Nina and miss Kim live with Tjerayh.

Naomi, December, 2000

Naomi could not write such a rich and colourful piece by herself. Nevertheless, with scaffolding, she is able to participate far more fully in a literary world. We hope that this new knowledge becomes increasingly consolidated so that she is able to make choices from her new repertoire about the resources she uses in her writing.

Finally, here is a piece written under test conditions during the DART assessment. Students were provided with a mysterious note written by 'J.E.' to 'M'. They were asked to write a narrative in which this note played a part. The task is quite challenging for fragile writers. It shows how Naomi has been able to use the tools she has learned as part of scaffolding:

Maggie found. A tin Box that was lockd with a locker behind Joe's house. And it hade Joe's name on it.

Maggie and Jack were fithing and the Box floo out of maggie and jack evans hans And went in the River and the caront taken it

Jack went fishing And the Box went pas. Jack Jumpt in the water and got it he Jumpt out of the water and
wrig a letter Maggie I've found it Meet me behind Joe's
at 8am alone keep it to yourself

Jack evans he tacked the letter to Jos house and they
met at Jos house and they opened the Box

This piece shows that Naomi can plan using a narrative structure of Orientation, Complication, and Resolution. In fact, she has marked each paragraph in her text with an O, C, and R to indicate this. She is not using conjunctions to aid in cohesion, and her sentences are simple, joined only by 'and'.

Although Naomi does not have control of standard English, there is plenty of evidence that she is beginning to use it: she uses 'ed' in 'tacked' and 'opened' and 'jumped'. She uses 'taken', although not quite appropriately, and 'were' rather than 'was' in the first sentence.

Naomi's first piece of writing shows her difficulty with spelling at that stage: her writing is almost unreadable. Now Naomi is using larger chunks of letters which are more proof that her literate knowledge is growing: wrigg for 'write', 'tacked' for 'took', 'floo' for 'flew'.

When I talked to Naomi about her results this year, she was very proud and for the first time showed a great deal of interest. She took home her graph to show her parents. The dotted lines were very helpful, I believe, in helping her set goals for next year. Naomi is still counted as someone we worry about, but she is going well. Naomi's teacher wrote in her report for this term: Naomi has shown huge improvement in her Reading, Writing and Viewing. She will continue to improve with more scaffolding and improved attendance.
Vanessa

Vanessa is in Year 7, an obliging and cheerful student with a great sense of humour. Vanessa speaks strong Aboriginal English. Most of the Aboriginal students in Years 6 and 7 are able to switch dialects readily when needed, but Vanessa has great difficulty using standard Australian English. The problem is partly vocabulary, partly pronunciation. When Vanessa came to our school in Year 3, she could not write independently at all, only copy, and her spelling was unrecognisable. I have seen her in Silent Reading lessons in previous years slowly turning the pages of a thick novel, unable to read even the chapter headings. Nevertheless, Vanessa is also extremely determined, and has received very useful support from her classroom teacher and the Aboriginal Education Worker, Muriel O'Loughlin, this year.

Vanessa was absent 26% of the year, and rarely late:

![Vanessa's attendance chart]

Vanessa's DART assessment results reflect her growing confidence in literacy. The dotted lines above each column indicate the median for each year level, estimated from the 1997 National Literacy Survey. These medians are our goals for each year:

![DART assessment chart]
Last year concern was expressed over Vanessa's difficulty with the DART assessment because of the speed with which she works. This year, although I offered extra time to Vanessa to complete her tests, she was able to finish them soon after the other students; an extra 10 minutes rather than an extra hour. This indicates the increased confidence and competence with which Vanessa approached the tests.

**Fig 10 Vanessa's rate of improvement in relation to national data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Viewing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 P.L. below</td>
<td>1.5 P.L. below</td>
<td>1.0 P.L. below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>0.3 P.L. below</td>
<td>1.2 P.L. below</td>
<td>0.8 P.L. below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>0.9 P.L. above</td>
<td>0.5 P.L. below</td>
<td>0.9 P.L. below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of impr. cf national rate</td>
<td>4.5 times national rate over 2 years</td>
<td>Twice national rate over 2 years</td>
<td>Almost twice national rate over 2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, these scores are not the only evidence of Vanessa's growing literacy skills. She is able to read parts of Colin Bowles's *Surfing Mr Petrovic* (Profile Level 5) after scaffolding, and was also willing to struggle through other excerpts independently. She is able to read parts of Paul Jennings *Good Tip for Ghosts* (Profile Level 4.0) with confidence.

Her confidence in, and enjoyment of writing is very evident in her day to day work. Included here are three samples of Vanessa's writing. The first was written in 1998 as part of the DART assessment. Vanessa was in Year 4. Her Aboriginal English dialect has very different pronunciations in many instances, and she had real trouble with spelling, for example 'adid' for 'had' and 'fand' for 'found'. At this time Vanessa's safest strategy for writing was to stick to words that she knew she could spell, and her stories were thus very repetitive. For example, in this story, she includes the words 'fun', 'home' and 'good' on many occasions. Vanessa uses full stops, but not speech marks at this time:

> One day I was in the jong looking for birds it is good in the jong. I fand a big bird it's name is Griffin. Griffin got to say a word. My nest is lined with gold. I live high in the mountains. (These last two sentences copied from the instruction booklet.) I have a hom to Griffin and it is bog too and I live in my home. Will you be my frind. Yes seid Griffin I will be or find. So we went in my home. Then we went in Griffin home. It was fun on that day. We went to see my nanna and my mum it was fun too. Griffin did not have a nanna or a mum but he adid a tree and it is good in the tree and fun. (The End.)

Vanessa, December, 1999

Here is a newspaper article written by Vanessa in October this year in Year 7, after studying the structure of newspaper reports:

*The Salisbury North primary School celebrated Aboriginal Culture Awareness (ACA) week at Salisbury North R-7 school. Day started*

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*Getting Somewhere: Annual report of the DWRAT project November 2001*
out by a assembly. A man called Vince Bukskin is a Aboriginal Development Officer for the city of Salisbury. They had lots to do like doing Arts and Crafts, Jewellery making, Dream Time stories, Damper making, netball, football, and Badge making...

Aunti Mooie O'Loughlin said ACAW day is always a really good fund day for us here at SNR R-7. We all enjoy it very much she also said. One of the student called Winifred Rankine said that she had a very good day, but next year she wouldn't because she will be going to High School.

Vanessa, December, 2000

This piece of writing shows Vanessa's understanding of how a newspaper report is structured. The opening paragraph provides the who, when, what, where. The following paragraphs provide more detail about the day. The final paragraphs provide evaluative commentary from two participants.

Vanessa's retell of Where the Wild Things Are was written for the whole school writing assessment without teacher assistance. It shows her increased control over spelling and punctuation, and her ability to use literate language and structures in her writing. As part of the assessment, she was required to describe an illustration for which there were no words. This part of the text shows that Winnie is still reliant on other people's language resources when writing in a literate way. This section is markedly more simple when compared to the author, Maurice Sendak's language.

Nevertheless, Vanessa has produced some great pieces of scaffolded writing. Here is her description of Wahnée, written after studying Rowan of Rin by Emily Rodda. The description is patterned after Rodda's description of a witch:

She bit her tongue and glared at Zira In the sunlight her eyes were dark blue. Her cheeks were red with anger and her hair drooped like thick rags. Wahnée smelt like the bins at my house. Zira pushed the
chair, placed the bag of food on Wahnee’s lap and moved slowly away, closing her eyes, trying not to see her.

But Wahnee didn’t have any interest in her. Wahnee was smelling the bag and tasting the food bit by bit.

Vanessa moves to high school next year. We know how far she has come. We also know how fragile that new knowledge and understanding of text and language is. We hope that she finds teachers whose language and pedagogy continues to make accessible the knowledge she needs to master school learning.

These case studies provide a long term snapshot of three students’ progress in literacy. They leave us in most cases hopeful but certainly not complacent. We still have plenty to learn about how to make school business, and literate business explicit and accessible for all students. We are still faced with the challenge that Harry provides. We give up on no one.
FEATURES OF PROJECT IN 2001
Scaffolded literacy process
Scaffolded literacy, as devised by Brian Gray from the University of Canberra, remains the foundation of our program. The program is used as the basis for classroom literacy, as well as individual reading programs for Aboriginal students most at risk. It is important to add that, while Dr Gray and Wendy Cowey provided a great deal of support at the beginning of the project, funding issues have prevented us from being included in their own scaffolding project. Consequently we take full responsibility for our interpretations of Dr Gray's scaffolding process, and the way it has been represented in Salisbury North classrooms.

This year we have extended our repertoire and included genres other than narrative in our program. The outline follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 1</th>
<th>Term 2</th>
<th>Term 3</th>
<th>Term 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reception/Yr 1</td>
<td>Narrative: Chicken Licken</td>
<td>Science Report: Koalas</td>
<td>Narrative: Farmer Duck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2/3</td>
<td>Narrative: Mrs Wobble by Alan Ahlberg</td>
<td>Scientific Report: Platypuses</td>
<td>Narrative: The Lion and the Mouse retold by Patricia Scott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4/5</td>
<td>Narrative: The Lion and the Mouse retold by Patricia Scott</td>
<td>Procedure: Egg carton people</td>
<td>Narrative: Good Tip for Ghosts by Paul Jennings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6/7</td>
<td>Narrative: Rowan of Rin by Emily Rodda</td>
<td>Narrative: Rowan of Rin by Emily Rodda</td>
<td>Newspaper reports:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study of each text, incorporating reading, grammar, spelling and writing takes at least one term. Through classroom conversations around close analysis of parts of the text, students grow to understand the intent of the author and the author’s strategies as they become apparent in the grammar of the text. As students master the spelling, and practice constructing sentences in a similar style, so they gradually transfer their new knowledge into their own writing.

The year felt as though we were in maintenance mode: it was marked with a considerable staff turnover in DWRAT. It was with great sadness that we farewelled Caterina Mancini at the end of term 1. Caterina was a Year 2/3 teacher who had been with the program since its inception, and whose skill, commitment and ability to support other teachers is sadly missed. Other staff changes occurred through pregnancy, promotion and long service leave. These teachers were replaced by short term contract teachers, supported by AET Anne Hamnett, and Coordinator Language and Literacy, Rose Ashton. In addition, all new staff were trained in Scaffolded Literacy, and two of those took it up at the basis of their classroom literacy program.

Last year’s report mentioned our concern with the writing process: we were concerned that students were too dependent on patterning from. With input from Brian Gray when he was last in Adelaide, we have made improvements to the writing process and have found ways for students to become more independent, using broader text patterns.
Individual Reading Support Program with Aboriginal Parent Literacy Workers
The individual reading support for at risk students was carried out in 2001 by AEW Muriel O'Loughlin (middle and upper primary) and trainee AEW Thurza Buckskin (junior primary). At the beginning of the year, the students most at risk were identified, and a timetable established. The goal for each student was three 20-minute sessions each week. This was sometimes achieved and significant improvement was noted when this support could be sustained for a period of time. The program has made a significant difference to the confidence and reading strategies of many of the students involved. Some of the most encouraging stories are from the older students, including one who would say at the beginning of the year ‘Can you read that? I can’t. I can’t read.’ By the end of the year he would confidently come to read with ‘Aunty Mooe’, and even volunteered to read in front of his class.

The reading program uses Macmillan Education Foundation series. These readers are levelled to Reading Recovery Level 25, which should be about the end of Year 3. The use of levelled readers is controversial in some ways. It is true that most readers are devoid of many structural and linguistic features which help students to make meaning from texts. They often lack cohesion. However, there are many reasons why we have chosen to work with these texts in this way:

- This reading support augments, and does not replace the class literacy program. The critical study of generic features is a strong focus of the classroom literacy programs and is not the purpose of this part of the program.
- The purpose of this part of the program is to introduce and practice specific reading strategies most effectively taught in one-to-one tuition. These strategies focus in the first instance on getting meaning from text, rather than ‘barking at print’.
- Because of funding constraints, the use of Aboriginal Education Workers and School Service Officers, rather than teachers, is the only way such intensive support can be offered in the school over a sustained period, and sufficient support is required to ensure that this team is able to work confidently in the program.
- The levelled books provides a structure within which AEW’s and the students themselves can monitor student reading development.
- Once students have reached Level 17 (about Year 2 standard), they graduate from the program with a book presentation and certificate at assembly. They are weaned from these readers as soon as we possibly can. Students at risk in higher year levels stay in the program for longer in order to build confidence which is often lacking.

Interest in our individual reading program has come from many schools. Workshops have been conducted in Port Augusta, Raukkan, Kaurna Plains school and twice in Ceduna. AEW’s Muriel O’Loughlin and Thurza Buckskin have been involved in several of these workshops. Muriel led many parts of the Kaurna Plains workshop, and will continue to support the AEW’s in that school in the program until they are on their feet.

Unfortunately there is no funding for ongoing support of school support people in implementing this program, and it is unlikely that the work is being carried out effectively without this ongoing support.
ASSPA Support
The support from the school's ASSPA committee has continued to be strong. They have assisted us by funding the DART assessments for all Aboriginal students, because they regard this monitoring of student progress as a useful way of helping parents and students to monitor their progress. They have also supported us with the extra consumables necessary for some parts of the program.

Attendance continues to be a focus of ASSPA concern. This year attendance awards have been presented to the best Aboriginal attenders in each year level at the end of each term. Thurza Buckskin, our trainee AEW, was in charge of keeping track of student attendance. She produced pie charts to show student attendance for some families, but they have not been used in working with parents. They take quite a long time to produce.

The idea of developing attendance pie charts has been taken up by the 'What Works' website, a website dedicated to effective working with Aboriginal students. This tool will be used by Salisbury North AEW's to more easily produce these pie charts for raising the awareness of parents.

Ongoing teacher support and development
Eight classrooms are now using scaffolding as their literacy pedagogy. Some of those classroom teachers are contract teachers and we don't know if they will be back in 2001. Those that are left will be supported with notes and planning time, but will be in control of their classroom program, with adult support of some kind in the classroom for literacy lessons. This adult support might be an Aboriginal Education Resource Teacher, an English as a Second language Teacher, a School Support Officer, or Parent Literacy Worker. All teachers attended a full day's training at the beginning of the year, as well as an hour's planning session at the beginning of every term, and weekly planning.

Open Classrooms, visitors and workshops:
Open classrooms were held twice during the year. In addition, a full day's training was held for new teachers, run by the DWRAT team in May. We opened up the day to other departmental staff. Forty-six additional teachers came. The number is indicative of the interest engendered by scaffolding in schools with high proportions of Aboriginal students.

National and international recognition
Salisbury North R-7 school is one of the feature schools on the new What Works website. This website was developed as an adjunct to the What Works document published in 2000 as the report of the Strategic Initiatives Project (part of the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiative Program). It is gratifying to see our work
showcased in a national forum. A recent visit from the new federal minister for education, Dr Brendan Nelson was a positive experience.

Rose Ashton and I are both giving papers at the forthcoming Australian Council of TESOL Associations Conference, *Learners from Diverse Cultures* in Adelaide.

**Teachers as Researchers Mentoring Scheme (TARMS)**
During 2000, Salisbury North R-7 entered into a contract with Anangu Education Services to support teachers on the Pitjantjatjara Lands in conducting action research projects. This support is provided in conjunction with the University of South Australia and Flinders University. Lecturers from these two universities help teachers and schools with research design, data collection and analysis. Our role is to provide ongoing support, training and development to assist teachers in their classroom practice. In 2001, our role was limited to the running of two workshops on *Extending Oral English in the Classroom* in Alice Springs in March and September. These workshops were held for the ‘Three Schools Project’: Murputja, Kenmore and Amata school staffs. The contract is now completed.

**SAPPA Literacy and Numeracy Project:**
Early in the year, in a desperate bid to find funding for my position for the rest of the year, we applied to the South Australian Primary Principals' Association to become a 'High Performance School'. When we met the criteria in literacy (not numeracy!), our role was to negotiate with three schools on finding ways of developing their literacy programs. Our nominated schools were Ceduna Area School, Flinders View Primary, and Willsden Primary, both in Port Augusta. Training and development included sessions on data collection, scaffolding, introduction to genres, listening to children read, and developing a whole school literacy continuum.

It was hoped that the project would provide an avenue for supporting other schools in implementing scaffolding, as considerable interest had been expressed, but this did not eventuate. There are several reasons for this: the time line was too short, contact was insufficient, and schools understandably would not make a major change to their literacy programs when there was no sign of ongoing support to do so. Nevertheless, the project was very satisfying in some ways.

**Scaffolding support for Aboriginal Schools**
In the second semester, funding was provided by Ms Jillian Miller, Superintendent, Aboriginal Education, S.A. Department of Education, to support some Aboriginal schools in scaffolding. Support was provided to Raukkan and Kaurna Plains Aboriginal schools. Raukkan will continue with scaffolding in 2002 if support is provided. My role with Kaurna Plains school was to conduct a whole school reading assessment, and train the Aboriginal Education Workers in individual reading support for those students at risk in reading.
Conclusion

This year has been one of maintenance: the changes in staff have prevented us from developing the program much further, although as mentioned previously, our pedagogy for teaching writing has improved. I can see the gaps, particularly in paying critical attention to power, gender issues in texts. These issues are focused on in many classrooms, but not yet systematically. That will have to wait for another time.

Our Marie Clay and DART assessments have shown that this slow and careful perseverance is paying off. Some students have not progressed as well as we would like, but on the whole they have made significant progress. Particularly when compared with the Basic Skills Test results for indigenous students state-wide, our students are doing alright!

2002 will bring dramatic changes to Salisbury North School. Our former principal, Julie Bishop, is currently a literacy consultant in New York and will not be returning. Our Aboriginal Education Teacher, Anne Hamnett, has won a position as a coordinator at another school. Our coordinator in language and literacy, Rose Ashton, is moving to the country. Both of these teachers have supported scaffolding by team teaching with classroom teachers from Reception to Year 7 since the beginning of the program. Six of the eight classroom teachers are either definitely transferring, on accouchement leave, or are contract teachers who are likely to be replaced by permanent teachers transferring in. I am looking for other leadership positions, and am not expecting to be in the school. The school does not need a support person working almost full time coordinating the DWRAT program. Aboriginal Education Worker, Muriel O'Loughlin and two remaining classroom teachers will be holding the program together!

It's been a good three years, and all efforts will be made to maintain DWRAT next year. Talks are underway on how this can happen. The exciting results from the Year 1 and 2 Junior Primary students, where all students have reached our goals for the year, demonstrate how appropriate early literate instruction is making a difference. We have to make sure that this gain is not lost through staff turnover.

Ongoing issues

Despite the encouraging outcomes of DWRAT at Salisbury North R-7 School, there is at this moment no definite funding to extend Scaffolding in South Australia. The program acknowledges with gratitude the support of Ms Jillian Miller, Superintendent of Aboriginal Education. Support from her meagre pool of uncommitted funds allowed my
position to continue to the end of 2001. Ms Miller is currently investigating ways of giving scaffolding a profile at the Aboriginal Education Unit in 2002.

The politics which are hindering the trial of scaffolding in other South Australian schools are complex and messy. In addition, I suspect that the language of pedagogy, that is our conversations with students while we teach, is not on most people's agenda, despite the lack of improvement in Aboriginal literacy outcomes over the past few years. Our teaching is not making the curriculum accessible to students whose home practices are not congruent with school practices.

The nationally produced Statements and Profiles, and the newly introduced South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability Framework, only mention pedagogy, or 'how' we teach, in passing. For instance, The SACSA Framework does not... authorise a particular way of going about teaching... Teaching means providing a range and variety of learning tasks with appropriate kinds and levels of scaffolding (SACSA Framework, p11). This is not sufficient guidance. What are appropriate kinds and levels of scaffolding?

I believe the last time that we looked at our classroom talk as a profession was when we took on so-called 'open ended' questioning in the 1980's, a pedagogy which has left many students without a clue about what the teacher really regards as a culturally valued answer (see for example Freidbody, Ludwig and Gunn, 1997). It is time to pay attention again to the language we use in our classrooms. What work is our talk doing?

It is timely to thank all those who have given their time to DWRAT over the past three years: firstly the classroom teachers who have been prepared to adjust long held beliefs about teaching to try something new, and Muriel O'Loughlin, the Aboriginal Education Worker who has patiently worked on individual reading with so many children, and explained the project and negotiated with so many parents for their support. Thanks to Language and Literacy coordinator Rose Ashton, and Aboriginal Education Teacher Anne Hamnett for their flexibility, brains and commitment. Thanks to Debbie Moyle, the chair of our school ASSPA committee for her ongoing and vocal support, as well as her good ideas. We have been a great team!

Thanks to Jillian Miller, Superintendent of Aboriginal Education, DETE, Mr Peter Bucksbin, Assistant Secretary, Aboriginal Education Branch, Department of Education, Science and Training, and two federal education ministers, Dr David Kemp and Dr Brendan Nelson. Their encouragement has kept us going. Finally, thanks to our former principal, Julie Bishop, whose passion and persistence has been an inspiration, if exhausting.

Bronwyn Parkin
Research Co-ordinator

DWRAT Project
15th December, 2001
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Appendix

Detailed reports of the Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers (DART) assessments

Years 4-7, August, 2001
Year 4 Cohort 2001

Year 4 Cohort Viewing  Aug '01

Year 4 Cohort Reading  Aug '01

Year 4 Cohort Writing  Aug '01
Analysis of Year 4 data
All students have reached the national Year 4 median in Viewing

50% of the Year 4 students have reached the national Year 5 median in Viewing

50% of the students have reached the national Year 4 median in Reading

All students are within 12 months of the Year 4 median in Reading

All students are more than 12 months behind the national median in Writing

N.B. There is no data on rates of improvement, as this is the first DART test the students have taken.
Year 5 Cohort 2001

Year 5 Cohort Viewing □ Aug '00 □ Aug '01

Year 5 Cohort Reading □ Aug '00 □ Aug '01

Year 5 Cohort Writing □ Aug '00 □ Aug '01
Analysis of Year 5 data

38% of Year 5 students have reached the national Year 5 median in Viewing

75% of Year 5 students are within 12 months of the national Yr 5 median in Viewing

On average, in Viewing, Yr 5 students have improved 0.6 Profile Levels in 1 year, twice the national rate

25% of Yr 5 students have reached the national median in Reading

50% of Yr 5 students are within 12 months of the national median in Reading

On average, in Reading, Yr 5 students have improved 0.6 Profile Levels in 1 year, slightly better than the national rate

38% of Year 5 students have reached the national Year 5 median in Writing

50% of Yr 5 students are within 12 months of the national Yr 5 median in Writing

On average, in Writing, Yr 5 students have improved 0.2 Profile Levels in 1 year, slightly worse than the national rate
Analysis of Year 6 data

All Yr 6 students have reached the national Yr 6 median in Viewing

All Year 6 students have reached the national Yr 7 median in Viewing

On average, in Viewing, Yr 6 students have improved 1.6 Profile Levels in 2 years, 2.6 times the national rate of progress in Viewing

50% of Yr 6 students have reached the national Yr 6 median in Reading

75% of Yr 6 students are within 12 months of the national Yr 6 median in Reading

On average, in Reading, Yr 6 students have improved 1.0 Profile Levels in 2 years, slightly better than the national rate

75% of Yr 6 students have reached the national Yr 6 median in Writing

On average, in Writing, Yr 6 students have improved 1.0 Profile Levels in 2 years, twice the national rate of progress
Year 7 Cohort 2001

Year 7 cohort Viewing

Year 7 Cohort Reading

Year 7 Cohort Writing

Deadly Writin', Readin' and Talkin' Project 2001
Analysis of Year 7 data

All Yr 7 students have reached the Yr 7 national median in Viewing

On average, in Viewing, Yr 7 students have improved 1.4 Profile Levels over 2 years, 2.3 times the national rate of progress

15% of students have reached the Yr 7 national median in Reading

100% are within 12 months of the national Yr 7 median in Reading

On average, in Reading, Yr 7 students have improved 1.3 Profile Levels over 2 years, 1.5 times the national rate of progress

50% of Yr 7 students have reached the national Yr 7 median for Writing

On average, in Writing, YR 7 students have improved 0.9 Profile Levels over 2 years, almost twice the national rate of progress.